
United States Army Garrison Heidelberg

+ + + + + Retiree Newsletter + + + + +

April 2007

A Publication of the United States Army Garrison Heidelberg Retiree Council

Council President: LTC (R) Lawrence Applebaum

VP Programs: MAJ (R) Bernd Rieger
VP Attendance: MSG (R) Robert McCoy

VP Public Relations: SGM (R) Donald Denese
Secretary: MSG (R) Donald Marsh

President's Corner

Last Retiree Council Meeting

The last Retiree Council meeting included a presentation by Ms. Verena Kurz-Feuerstein, the director of the Bestattungshaus Heidelberg. Ms. Kurz-Feuerstein presented subject matter that most people don't want to hear or think about, but she made it very light, sprinkled in some humor, and all the while held our attention and kept us focused on her overall message on what is available today and to continually stay up-to-date on funeral planning. She also pointed out that she works with the US Army Memorial Affairs Activity, Europe concerning the return of remains to the United States for internment as well as for interment here in Germany.

Retiree Appreciation Day

The USAREUR-wide Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) is a thing of the past. The responsibility to sponsor this annual event has now been assigned to the various US Army garrisons. The US Army Garrison, Heidelberg RAD will be on Saturday, 20 October 2007. In addition to various presentations, there will be representatives from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and the US Consulate Frankfurt Federal Benefits Unit (Social Security and Veterans Affairs). The extent of the medical, wellness and other support is still in the planning phase.

Casualty Assistance Checklist

Our US Army Garrison Heidelberg Retirement Services Office has a Casualty Assistance Checklist. The intent is that the retiree fill-in the appropriate information, keep it up-to-date and file it with the other important survivors' benefits documentation. We will distribute copies at the next Retiree Council meeting.

Cremation as an Alternative

Currently, many older retirees and their spouses are opting for cremation as an alternative to a traditional burial. The US Army Memorial Affairs Activity, Europe (USAMAA-E) at Landstuhl works with the Friedhöfe Mannheim Krematorium on a contract basis. The procedure is straight-forward. You pay for the transport of the remains to USAMAA-E, which in-turn transports the remains to Mannheim for cremation. The urn with the ashes is then picked up by the funeral institute of your choice in preparation for whatever interment service you have planned. At the next Retiree Council meeting we will have a hand-out with information about the cremation costs and the documentation required, to include the blank forms.

Corresponding with Members of Congress

There are many issues that affect retiree benefits and entitlements. If you feel strongly about any of the issues, make the time to write to your senators and representative. Use the following link to access the access the Military Officers Association of America. <http://capwiz.com/moaa/home/>. Using this web page as the start point you can look at the issues and also use prepared emails to ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor or support important legislation. You need not be a member of MOAA to use this web site to contact your senators and representative.

Some Interesting Facts

The current Baden-Württemberg average life expectancy for men is 77.6, and for women it is 82.7. This is tops in Germany and higher than in USA. The US Army Garrison, Heidelberg is in Baden-Württemberg.

The purchasing power for the average Heidelberger was 1518 €/per person/month in 2006. Heidelberg is among the top ten cities in Germany. The current population of Heidelberg is 143,000.

Death of Retiree

LTC Aldo Bettelli died on 23 March 2007 in Dalhart, Texas after a long illness. For many years, Colonel Bettelli and his wife Hela regularly participated in the quarterly Retiree Council meetings. He was 84 years old.

Advanced Directives for Patients

The advanced directives include the living will and the durable health care power of attorney. Both are very useful documents if you reach a condition when you are unable to make your own medical treatment decisions. It is of the utmost importance that the health care power of attorney be given to the surrogate decision maker. If you expect to need a living will for a German doctor or German hospital, it is best to use the Patientenverfügung, the German equivalent of the living will. The legal assistance office can provide support with the preparation of advanced directives. In the case of the directives for Germany, these documents need not be notarized and there are some very good examples on the Internet.

It is important to discuss the living will or Patientenverfügung with your doctor to be sure there is a clear understanding of what you want and your doctor agrees to follow your instructions in the advance directive. If your doctor does not agree, select another doctor. If you must go to a German hospital, the same logic is applied. The hospital must be one that accepts the advance directive.

The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it.

-Theodore Roosevelt

The Next Retiree Council Meeting

The next Council meeting will be held at 1200 hours on Saturday, 26 May 2007 at the Goldener Hirsch Restaurant, Schwetzingenstrasse 29, Heidelberg-Kirchheim. All retirees, widowed spouses of retirees, family members and their guests are invited to attend.

The program will include a presentation by Larry Applebaum that will focus the responsibilities and functions of the Casualty Assistance Officer as well as the responsibilities of the surviving spouse. A hand-out of the presentation will be provided.

To help us better plan the meeting and luncheon, please call or email your reservations to MAJ (R) Bernd Rieger, 06221-374724 (Email berieger@hotmail.de) or to LTC (R) Larry Applebaum 06224-52741 (Email: L-M.Applebaum@t-online.de) by Wednesday, 23 May 2007.

Community Retirement Services Office

Any military retiree or surviving spouse of a military retiree needing retirement services should call the Community Retirement Services Office. SSG (R) George Hall, our community retirement services officer volunteer, is in the office on a full-time basis, Monday through Friday. His telephone number is DSN 370-8236 or from a civilian phone, 06221-57-8236.

Retiree Council Newsletter via Email

We now have 76 people who receive this newsletter via email. For those of you who have an email address and still receive a paper copy of the newsletter, we can add you to the email distribution list. Send an email to L-M.Applebaum@t-online.de with the subject line "Retiree Council Newsletter via Email" and we will add you to the list.

Commander
US Army Garrison, Heidelberg
Attention: Retirement Services Officer
Unit 29237
APO AE 09102

Official Business

Postage and Fees Paid
US Department of Defense